

## Message Text

PAGE 01 TEL AV 02492 01 OF 02 251419Z

42

ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W

----- 044583

O R 251340Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6424

INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMCONSUL JERUSALEM

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY PARIS

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 TEL AVIV 2492

EXDIS

STATE PASS AMB KEATING

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, XF, IS, EG, US

SUBJECT: ISRAEL HUNKERS DOWN

SUMMARY: THE ISRAELI GOVT IS HOLDING FIRMLY TO THE NEGOTIATING POSTURE IT HELD WHEN THE SHUTTLE TALKS WERE BROKEN OFF A MONTH AGO. WHILE RABIN'S OWN STAR HAS REACHED A ZENITH OF SORTS, THE DOMESTIC POLITICAL ENVIRONMENT WILL BE A HEAVY CONSTRATINT SHOULD THE GOI TRY NEW INITITIIVES, WITH SERIOUS DOMESTIC POLTITICAL CONTROVERSY LIKELY TO ERUPT WERE GOI TO TRY TO REACH DECISION ON FINAL BORDERS, DISPOTION OF WEST BANK AND OTHER CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES. MOREOVER, ISRAELIS BELIEVE THAT U.S. INTERNAL POLITICAL DYNAMICS AND SEA SEVENTS WILL LIMIT POSSIBLE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON ISRAEL OF U.S. POLICY REASSESSMENT. ISRAELI POLITICAL PSYCHOLOGY ALSO ENCOURAGES GOI TO CLOSE RANKS UNDER "PRESSURE," AND TO BECOME MORE POLITICALLY RIGID. IN ADDITION, ISRAELIS BELIEVE ARABS WOULD INTERPRET ANY NEW ISRAELI CONCESSIONS AT THIS STAGE AS CAPITULATION UNDER CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 TEL AV 02492 01 OF 02 251419Z

PRESSURE FROM WASHINGTON, ENCOURAGING FURTHER ARAB TERRITORIAL DEMANDS WITHOUT RECONSIDERATION OF ARAB SIDE OF EQUATION. FINALLY, ISRAELIS MAINTAIN THAT PROLONGED U.S. "ISRAELI CONFRONT-ATION COULD TEMPT ARABS TO CONSIDER WAR OPTION. AND IN THAT

EVENTUALITY GOI WOULD BE WELL ADVISED TO HOLD ON TO CURRENT STRATEGIC POSITIONS. IN EFFECT, A VARIETY OF ARGUMENTATION LEADS ISRAELI COMMENTATORS AND POLITICIANS TO CONCLUDE THE NEXT STEP, IF DEADLOCK IS TO BE BROKEN, SHOULD COME THEIR FROM U.S. (BY HEALING RIFT WITH ISRAEL) AND/OR EGYPT. IN SUM, GOI STAND-PAT ATTITUDE IS LIKELY TO PERSIST AS LONG AS LEADERSHIP BELIEVES THAT IS AT LEAST REASONABLE POSSIBILITY THAT, DESPITE WHATEVER PROBLEMS MAY EXIST WITH EXECUTIVE BRANCH, SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL AND FOR ITS ECONOMIC AND MILITARY REQUIREMENTS REMAINS STRONG IN THE CONGRESS. END SUMMARY.

1. IN THE MONTH THAT HAS PASSED SINCE THE SUSPENSION OF NEGOTIATIONS, GOI HAS GIVEN EVERY INDICATION OF HAVING DECIDED THAT CORRECT COURSE AT PRESENT JUNCTURE IS TO HOLD FIRMLY TO ITS NEGOTIATING POSTURE OF MAR 22, AND NOT TO COME UP WITH NEW POLITICAL INITIATIVES. PRIME MINISTER RABIN'S INDEPENDENCE DAY INTERVIEW (TEL AVIV 2358) EMPHASIZED GOI'S TWO-PRONG APPROACH OF CONCENTRATING ON EXTENSIVE INFO CAMPAIGN IN U.S. AND MAINTAINING ITS CURRENT POSITIONS IN DISCUSSIONS WITH USG AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS. THIS WAS REINFORCED IN APR 23 SPEECH TO EXPORTERS ASSOCIATION IN WHICH RABIN SAID THAT GOI'S BEST NEW POSITION WAS TO HOLD FIRMLY TO OPTIONS PRESENTED TO EGYPT IN RECENTLY SUSPENDED NEGOTIATIONS.

2. THERE IS BROAD, HARD CONSENSUS AMONG ISRAELIS THAT GOI POSITION IN RECENT NEGOTIATIONS SHOWED GREAT FLEXIBILITY (RECENT POLL SAYS 80 PERCENT BACK GOI POSITION, THAT CRITICISM BY SENIOR AMERICAN LEADERS REPRESENTS A DISTORTED AND UNFAIR ANALYSIS OF GOI'S ROLE IN NEGOTIATIONS, AND THAT NEXT STEP IS NOW UP TO EITHER EGYPT OR U.S. WE CANNOT JUDGE WHETHER ISRAELI DESIDERATA IS FOR SUBSTANTIVE OR MERELY COSMETIC EGYPTIAN INITIATIVE, BUT COMMENTATORS AND POLITICIANS OF VIRTUALLY ALL PERSUASIONS ARGUE THAT GOI WOULD DAMAGE ITSELF, AND ISRAELI INTERESTS, BY COMING UP WITH ITS OWN NEW PROPOSALS AT THIS STAGE. MINIMAL PRECONDITION FOR PRESENTATION OF NEW GOI IDEAS IS SEEN AS HEALING OF CURRENT RIFT IN ISRAELI/U.S. RELATIONSHIP, PARTICULARLY AS REGARDS U.S. DECISIONS ON MILITARY SUPPLY  
CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 TEL AV 02492 01 OF 02 251419Z

AND ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE.

3. THERE HAVE BEEN ISRAELI PRESS REPORTS IN RECENT DAYS, PRESUMABLY ON BACKGROUND FROM OFFICIAL MFA SOURCE, THAT CABINET WILL SOON INITIATE DISCUSSION TO ESTABLISH GOI'S TERRITORIAL AND POLITICAL DEMANDS FOR OVERALL PEACE SETTLEMENT IN PREPARATION FOR RENEWAL OF GENEVA CONF. SHOULD SUCH DISCUSSION ACTUALLY TAKE PLACE, WE BELIEVE THAT IT WILL BE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT FOR GOI TO DEVELOP INTERNAL CONSENSUS REQUIRED TO WIN NECESSARY PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR FAR-REACHING NEW PROPOSALS GOING BEYOND WELL-ESTABLISHED GENERALIZED FORMULATION. ANY ATTEMPT BY GOI TO REACH CLEAR DECISIONS ABOUT FINAL BORDERS OR DISPOSITION OF WEST BANK IS GUARANTEED TO EVOKE HEATED

DOMESTIC CONTROVERSY. WE ARE STRUCK BY FACT  
THAT RECENT STATEMENTS BY MINISTERS GALILI AND YAACOB  
TRYING TO PUT GOI'S APPROACH O PALESTINIAN ISSUE IN MORE POSITIVE  
LIGHT (WITHOUT BREAKING NEW GROUND)EITHER INVOLVED COMPLEX  
CIRCUMLOCUTIONS OR LED DIRECTLY TO RETRACTIONS(SEPTEL).

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PAGE 01 TEL AV 02492 02 OF 02 251429Z

42

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 TEL AVIV 2492

EXDIS

4. AS ISRAELIS CONSIDER THEIR OWN NEXT MOVES, THEY INEVITABLY  
HAVE BEEN PREOCCUPIED WITH ONGOING U.S. POLICY REASSESSMENT.  
PRESIDENT FORD'S SPEECH AND ALLON'S WASHINGTON VISIT HAVE  
BEEN CAREFULLY SCRUTINIZED FOR INDICATIONS OF CURRENT  
TREND IN U.S. /ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP. ISRAELIS ARE ONLY GRADUALLY  
ACCEPTING POSSIBILITY THAT U.S. POLICY STUDY IS A SERIOUS  
EXERCISE RAHTER THAN A COMSEMTIC DEVICE TO COVER U.S.  
DISCOMFORTURE AT FAILURE OF THE SHUTTLE EFFORT OR A NOT VERY  
SUBTLE ATTEMPT TO BRING PRESSURE ON ISRAEL. NEVERTHELESS,  
DOMINANT VIEW HERE STILL APPEARS TO BE THAT WHILE RELATIONS  
ARE AND WILL REMAIN TENSE, IN SHORT RUN REASSESSMENT WILL  
NOT FINALLY PRODUCE SIGNIFICANT CHANGE IN U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONSHIP.  
WITHOUT MINIMIZING ISRAELI CONCERN THAT REASSESSMENT COULD  
HAVE NEGATIVE IMPACT ON LEVEL OF AID PROPOSED BY ADMINISTRATION  
OR COULD LEAD TO THEIR VIRTUAL ISOLATION AT GENEVA CONFERENCE,  
ISRAELIS NONETHELESS VIEW US POLITICAL DYNAMICS AS OPERATING  
ULTIMATELY IN THEIR FAVOR. THEY BELIEVE THAT SEA EVENTS HAVE  
SIGNIFICANTLY WEAKENED THE ADMINISTRATION. ISRAELIS ALSO BELIEVE  
THAT THEY ENJOY SUFFICIENT CONGRESSIONAL SUPPORT TO ASSURE  
CONTINUATION AND EVEN INCREASES IN U.S. ECONOMIC AND MILITARY  
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PAGE 02 TEL AV 02492 02 OF 02 251429Z

AID, AND TO FIGHT BACK AGAINST ADMINISTRATION 'PRESSURE.'  
(WE NOW HEAR OPEN REFERENCES TO THE BATTLES OF 1970-71 OVER THE  
DELIVERY OF PHANTOMS.) THIS ANALYSIS REINFORCES ISRAELI  
CONVICTION THAT WREST COURSE FOR NOW IS TO HOLD FIRM,  
PENDING CLEARING OF ATMOSPHERE IN U.S./ISRAELI RELATIONS.

5. AS DEPT IS AWARE, MAJOR CONSTRAINT IN ANY GOI  
REASSESSMENT OF ITS POSITION IS DOMESTIC POLITICAL  
ENVIRONMENT. PARADOXICALLY, RABIN'S POPULARITY IS AT A ZENITH  
BUT HIS MANEUVERING ROOM IS VERY RESTRICTED. HIS OWN RECENT  
PUBLIC STATEMENTS, AS WELL AS THOSE OF HIS CLOSEST  
ASSOCIATES, HAVE EFFECT OF FURTHER LOCKING GOI INTO RIGID POSITIONS.  
WE ARE INCLINED TO AGREE WITH MANY COMMENTATORS WHO BELIEVE  
THAT PUBLIC SUPPORT FOR RABIN COULD FALL AWAY RAPIDLY WERE HE  
TO BE SEEN AS CAVING UNDER "PRESSURE" AT EXPENSE OF NATION'S "VITAL  
SECURITY INTERESTS." THERE IS NO SINGLE ISRAELI DEFINITION OF WHAT  
CONSTITUTES THE NATION'S "VITAL SECURITY INTERESTS." HOWEVER, AS  
FAR AS EGYPT IS CONCERNED, THERE IS BROAD CONSENSUS THAT MINIMUM  
POLITICAL REQUIREMENT FROM EGYPT FOR RETURN OF PASSES AND OILFIELDS  
IS FORMAL NON-BELLIGERENCY AGREEMENT.

6. COMMENTATORS ALSO EMPHASIZE UNIQUE ISRAELI POLITICAL  
PSYCHE WHICH LEADS ISRAELIS TO BECOME MORE UNCOMPROMISING UNDER  
PRESSURE. ISRAELIS MAINTAIN THAT ARABS WOULD READ NEW ISRAELI  
FLEXIBILITY UNDER PRESSURE FROM WASHINGTON AS SIGN OF WEAKNESS,  
AND INVITATION TO COME UP WITH NEW, EVEN MORE EXTREME DEMANDS.  
ARABS WOULD BE DISCOURAGED FROM COMING UP WITH MORE  
REASONABLE NEGOTIATING POSITION FROM THEIR SIDE, INVOLVING  
REQUISITE POLITICAL QUID-PRO-QUO FOR WITHDRAWALS. ADDITIONALLY,  
ISRAELIS ARGUE THAT IF DEADLOCK PERSISTS AND WAR CANNOT BE  
AVOIDED, IT IS IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST TO BE IN CONTROL OF MOST  
ADVANTAGEOUS POSSIBLE STRATEGIC POSITIONS. MANY ARGUE STRONGLY  
THAT CONTINUING U.S. /ISRAELI TENSIONS COULD IN FACT ENCOURAGE  
ARABS TO RESORT TO MILITARY OPTION, LEADING PRECISELY TO SITUATION  
WHICH U.S. WANTS TO AVOID. NET UPSHOT OF THESE CONSIDERATIONS IS  
ADAMANT CONVICTION THAT ONLY STRONG ISRAEL, VISIBLY SUPPORTED  
BY USG, CAN MAKE "CONSTRUCTIVE" CONTRIBUTION TO NEGOTIATING  
PROCESS. COMMENTATORS DO NOT AND PRESUMABLY CANNOT SPELL  
OUT JUST WHAT "CONSTRUCTIVE" CONTRIBUTION ISRAEL MIGHT BE WILLING  
TO MAKE; WE ASSUME THIS PROBABLY REFLECTS LACK OF AGREEMENT  
AND PRECISION ON THIS POINT IN MINDS OF GOI LEADERS.  
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PAGE 03 TEL AV 02492 02 OF 02 251429Z

7. FOREGOING MAY BE USEFUL TO DEPARTMENT IN CURRENT  
REASSESSMENT AND CONSIDERING OUR OWN NEXT STEPS IN EFFORTS  
TO MOVE ARAB-ISRAELI NEGOTIATIONS FORWARD. WE DO NOT RULE  
OUT POSSIBILITY THAT AFTER PASSAGE OF TIME GOI MAY INDEED COME  
UP WITH NEW NEGOTIATING IDEAS, BUT WE BELIEVE IT IMPORTANT TO  
RECOGNIZE OBSTACLES WHICH AT PRESENT STAND IN WAY OF FAR-REACHING  
(RATHER THAN JUST COSMETIC) NEW APPROACH. WHILE SOME

MODERATELY-ORIENTED COMMENTATORS HAVE URGED GOI TO SEIZE PRESENT  
MOMENT BEFORE GENEVA RECONVENES TO FIX ITS TERMS FOR OVERALL  
SETTLEMENT, OUR READING IS THAT CONSTRAINTS ON MAJOR NEW  
INITIATIVES WILL REMAIN SIGNIFICANTLY STRONGER THAN INCENTIVES.  
IN SUM, GOI STAND-PAT ATTITUDE IS LIKELY TO PERSIST AS LONG AS  
LEADERSHIP BELIEVES THERE IS AT LEAST REASONABLE POSSIBILITY  
THAT, DESPITE WHATEVER PROBLEMS MAY EXIST WITH EXECUTIVE BRANCH,  
SUPPORT FOR ISRAEL AND FOR ITS ECONOMIC AND MILITARY REQUIREMENTS  
REMAINS STRONG IN THE CONGRESS.  
VELIOTES

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## Message Attributes

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